

House Republican Press Release

May 10, 2005
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Rep. Miller: Bill Designating Corsair As State Aircraft Signed Into Law



Legislation (Senate Bill 585) cosponsored by state Representative Lawrence G. Miller, R-122nd District, that designates the F4U Corsair as the state aircraft and sets May 29th as Corsair Day was signed into law today by Governor M. Jodi Rell.

Workers at Vought-Sikorsky, United Aircraft, Pratt and Whitney and Hamilton Standard produced the Corsair, the only major combat aircraft of World War II that was built entirely in Connecticut, said Representative Miller, who spoke in favor of the bill on the floor of the House. Representative Miller's district includes part of Stratford, the home of Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation.

"I'd like to thank the governor for signing this measure into law. I look forward to the observation of the first annual Corsair Day later this month when we will honor the men and women who built the airplane at Vought-Sikorsky in Stratford as well as the heroic pilots who flew it during World War II. It is especially fitting that we designated the Corsair as our state aircraft this year. It is the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the 65th anniversary of the Corsair's first flight," Representative Miller said.

"As part of the Veterans Salute commemoration that will take place June 3rd through June 5th, a multi-plane Corsair flyover – 'Corsairs Over Connecticut' - will take place during this year's Barnum Festival Parade in Bridgeport," Representative Miller said.

"Connecticut played an integral role in the manufacture of aircraft flown by American pilots during World War II and the Corsair was one of the most effective fighter planes built in the American 'Arsenal of Democracy.' It was a major factor in turning the tide of battle in the Pacific Theater."

"Perhaps the most celebrated pilots who flew the Corsair were the members of Marine Major Gregory 'Pappy' Boyington's Black Sheep Squadron, who fought above the Northern Solomons and Rabaul, from August, 1943 through January, 1944 and were immortalized in the 1970's television series 'Baa Baa Black Sheep.' The Black sheep Squadron shot down 94 Japanese planes, and counted 8 aces, in addition to Boyington," Representative Miller said. "Several celebrities also piloted the Corsair, including Bob Barker, who hosted 'The Price is Right; Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox, and Ed McMahon, of the Tonight Show."

Of the 12,571 Corsairs manufactured between 1940 and 1952, only about 20 to 30 still exist today. It was the first American production aircraft that could achieve air speeds in excess of 400 miles per hour. It was the only American fighter designed before the United States entered World War II that was still being manufactured in 1953. It was the last propeller driven aircraft built for American fighter pilots. During World War II, for every Corsair shot down in air combat, Corsairs downed 11 enemy fighters, Representative Miller said.